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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, NI
SUBJECT: DOCTORS VS. THE FMG: THE STRIKE CONTINUES

REF: A) LAGOS 5704, B) LAGOS 6216, C) LAGOS 8027

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. DESPITE PUBLIC PRESSURE FROM GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THE NEWS MEDIA CALLING FOR AN END TO THE PUBLIC SUFFERING, LAGOS DOCTORS ARE STILL REFUSING TO RETURN TO THE HOSPITALS. THUS, ALL MEDICAL SERVICES IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED SINCE WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, BY THE DOCTORS' WALKOUT PROTESTING THE BAN ON PRIVATE PRACTICE FOR PHYSICIANS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE NEW PRIVATE HOSPITALS EDICT THAT REGULATES THE OPERATION OF PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN LAGOS STATE.

2. IN A SPECIAL TELEVISION BROADCAST THIS PAST WEEKEND, LAGOS STATE GOVERNOR COMMANDER NDUBUISI KANU ASKED THE DOCTORS TO RESUME THEIR DUTIES IN THE INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC. SIMILAR
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PLEAS CAME FROM THE CHAIMAN OF THE OYO STATE BRANCH OF THE NIGERIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (NMA) AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LAGOS STATE TEACHING SERVICES COMMISSION, WHO, IN SEPARATE STATEMENTS, CALLED ON THE DOCTORS TO RETURN TO WORK OR AT LEAST PROVIDE RELIEF FOR BASIC EMERGENCIES. IN ADDITION, THE DOCTORS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY CRITICIZED

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BY THE PRESS.

3. THE DOCTORS' RESPONSE HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY UNYIELDING. THE HEAD OF THE LAGOS STATE BRANCH OF THE NMA, DR. BEKO RANSOME-KUTI, DECLARED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON SUNDAY THAT "THE DOCTORS WERE NO LONGER GOING TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT" AND THAT MANY OF THE DOCTORS WOULD RATHER TAKE UP OTHER OCCUPATIONS THAN WORK UNDER THE NEW GOVERNMENT EDICT. HE SAID THAT THE EDICT MADE IT "PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION TO PRACTICE MEDICINE." HE CITED THE 2,000 NAIRA REGISTRATION AND 2,500 NAIRA ANNUAL RENEWAL FEE AS AN INDICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PREJUDICED INTENTIONS. DR. RANSOME-KUTI CONTENDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE BEING MISLED BY "OFFICERS OF THE MINISTRY." END UNCLASSIFIED.
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4. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE DOCTORS' STRIKE HAS ADDED A NEW INCREMENT OF MISERY TO THE LIFE OF MANY PEOPLE IN LAGOS. DOCTORS ARE REPORTEDLY REFUSING TO TREAT PATIENTS NO MATTER HOW SEVERE THE PROBLEM. ACCORDING TO SOME PRESS REPORTS, AS MANY AS ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE HAVE DIED
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BECAUSE OF A LACK OF MEDICAL ATTENTION DUE TO THE STRIKE AND THOUSANDS OF PATIENTS HAVE LEFT HOSPITALS IN LAGOS FOR TREATMENT ELSEWHERE, PARTICULARLY ABEOKUTA AND IBADAN.. IN THAT REGARD, A DUTCH CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER TOLD US OVER THE WEEKEND THAT AFTER HIS ONE YEAR OLD SON BROKE AN ARM IN A FALL, SEVERAL DOCTORS SIMPLY REFUSED TO HELP. AFTER THE PEDIATRIC DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS HOSPITAL FLATLY REFUSED TO SET THE ARM, THE ENGINEER'S WIFE AND CHILD, STILL UNTREATED AFTER 30 HOURS, LEFT FOR EUROPE.
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